



The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals & organisations concerned with the protection, promotion & support of breastfeeding worldwide. WABA action is based on the [Innocenti Declaration](#), the [Ten Links](#) for Nurturing the Future and the [Global Strategy for Infant & Young Child Feeding](#). WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF & an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

WABA 15th Anniversary - 14 February 2006

Celebrating 15 years of the Innocenti Declaration targets!

On the occasion of WABA's 15th anniversary, we celebrate 15 years of achievements of the Innocenti Declaration targets (due August 2005). WABA was born on 14 February 1991 to act on the Innocenti targets, specifically through large scale social mobilization such as the annual World Breastfeeding Week, information, networking and global advocacy.

Together with its core partners (IBFAN, ILCA, LLLI, LINKAGES, Wellstart International and ABM)* in the global breastfeeding movement, and the two lead UN agencies on children and health, UNICEF and WHO, WABA shares in the achievements of the Innocenti targets and has recently jointly celebrated the 15th anniversary in Florence, Italy, in November 2005. The meeting highlighted the achievements in each of the four target areas, noting also progress on the additional targets of the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. The key messages document entitled "*Celebrating Innocenti 1990-2005: Achievements, challenges and future imperatives*" provides a summary of the global achievements as well as the challenges still needing a concerted response (see <http://innocenti15.net>). Among the key achievements include:

- A 15% increase in rates of exclusive breastfeeding in the developing world in the first 10 years alone. Some countries doubled, tripled and even quadrupled their rates;
- More than 50 countries have set up some form of national breastfeeding authority;
- More than 19,000 maternity facilities in 150 countries have been designated baby friendly;
- Sixty-four countries have laws or regulations implementing the Code and subsequent WHA resolutions compared to only 9 countries in 1990;
- Fifty-nine countries have ratified at least one of the three ILO Conventions on maternity protection, while maternity leave has been extended from 12 to 14 weeks in the new Convention 183.

To this, WABA would add other achievements, such as:

- The greater role and recognition of mother support and community support systems in contributing towards increased breastfeeding rates worldwide;
- Ensuring breastfeeding on the agenda of other fora and movements through global advocacy and outreach to new partners;
- The inclusion of human rights as a fundamental principle and more recently gender equality, and men's involvement, in breastfeeding advocacy work.

Over the past 15 years, a great deal of progress was made but much more still needs to be done. Dr. Felicity Savage best describes it:

"The Innocenti Declaration, the work that led to it, and the energy that sprung from it, made breastfeeding promotion into a vital public health issue. The last 15 years have wrought a revolution in our thinking about child health with infant feeding as the basis of it. But let no-one fall into the trap of thinking that the job has been done: it is only just beginning - and we need Innocenti + 15 to make the world realise that."

For WABA, fifteen years is just one more wave in the revolution to improve infant feeding practices and better child survival, growth and development. Nevertheless, we need to celebrate this milestone so that as a movement we maintain the energy and gather sustenance for the next 15 years, or even the next 100 years.

WABA looks towards the new Declaration adopted at the 15th Anniversary meeting to inspire us in the next phase in order to respond to the surmounting challenges of poverty, the HIV pandemic, natural and human-made emergencies, neo-liberal globalization, environmental contamination, weakening health systems, gender inequities and women's increasing employment outside the home, including the non-formal sector. The Innocenti + 15 Declaration** calls on all parties to have greater commitment and increased action to bring about an **environment that enables mothers, families and other caregivers to make informed decisions about optimal feeding**, and to have skilled practical support in order to ensure the highest attainable standard of health and development for infants and young children. WABA is committed to acting on the new Innocenti Declaration and calls on all its partners and endorsers globally and locally to support this call for action.

Today as we celebrate 15 years of progress around the Innocenti, we also celebrate and thank all WABA's participants for your collective contributions towards this success. Having been born on Valentine's Day, WABA continues to be a force for happiness. We wish all WABA participants a Happy 15th Birthday, a Happy Valentine's Day, and may the spirit of love - which is the heart of all our work around breastfeeding, children and families - continue to bring you joy, meaning and courage in our efforts ahead!

* Abbreviations:

ABM - Academy for Breastfeeding Medicine

IBFAN - International Baby Food Action Network

ILCA - International Lactation Consultants Association

LLLI - La Leche League International

** The Innocenti + 15 Declaration is still being finalized and will be put up on the WABA website in due course. For more information on Innocenti 15, please visit <http://innocenti15.net>



[Site Map](#)

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